India's offer to extend technical expertise to African States in the field of agriculture

794. SHRI KALPNATH RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister during his recent visit to Harare in connection with the Eighth Non-Aligned Summit Meet offered farm technical expertise to the various African States ravaged by continuous drought year after year, so as to help them to stand on their own feet in the matter of food production;

(b) if so, to which countries such offer was made; and

(c) what was the response of each of them by way of entering into agreement for extending technical expertise in the field of agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) India has offered cooperation in the field of agriculture to the countries of Africa in general both at the time of the Conference of heads of State and Government of non-aligned countries at Harare in September this year as well as earlier during Prime Minister's visit to a number of African countries. Similar offers have also been made in various international fora and in bilateral discussions.

(c) India's offer has been welcomed. Further discussions will have to take place with individual countries that may be interested in order to work out the modalities of such cooperation and to set up specific projects.

Karakoram Highway

795. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Hindustan Times of the 10th October, 1986 to the effect that China has started work to upgrade the 420 km section of Karakoram Highway at a cost of 185 million Yuan linking Pak-occupied Kashmir through the Khurjerab Pass;

(b) if so, what are the details *thereof; and*

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto and what steps are being taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Chinese News Agency, Xinhua reported on October 9th, 1986, that more than 2200 workers have begun improvements on the road from Kashi in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to the Khunjerab Pass on "the Sino-Pakistan Border". The report stated that the investment of US $ 50 million on the 420 Km. Project would, after its completion in 1988, boost trade and friendly contacts between China, Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries.

(c) Government have repeatedly protested to the Governments of China and Pakistan regarding the construction of the Karakoram Highway and the opening of the Khunjerab Pass, making very clear India's position on the question of Chinese assistance to Pakistan in constructing the highway through portions of Indian territory under the illegal occupation of Pakistan.